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**June 29, 2010**

**To: Office of the Attorney General / Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**Re: CEREBUS Public Hearing, Methuen, Massachusetts ..... public comment**

I write as a long-time member of the greater Lawrence community, which is presently served by 2 hospitals: Caritas Holy Family in Methuen and Lawrence General in Lawrence. In my 34 years of general law practice in this area, I have worked with many non-profit organizations such as *Lawrence CommunityWorks*, *Lazarus House*, *Family Services*, the *Y.M.C.A.*, *Semana Hispana* and others, and have participated in community activities such as inter-organizational roundtable discussions, focus groups, Board of Directors tenures, public area clean-ups, volunteer trainings and lots more. I grew up in Lawrence, then Methuen, and my law office has always been located in the same Lawrence neighborhood where I was first raised. I have a passion for Lawrence and I am very encouraged by all of the great things now happening in the City—including over \$100M in investments for revitalization of the historic mills—after so many years of its being the poorest city in the Commonwealth. My participation in some of these exciting happenings has given me the opportunity to make certain observations, which I would like to share in these comments.

I am concerned about the critical challenges that a dedicated and caring non-profit, specifically the Lawrence General Hospital, would have in competing with a very well financed NY venture capital firm with \$400 million in capital, if that money served only the profit motive. The public needs to be protected in regard to how those vast financial resources will be used. There should be controls set in place to guide the competitive instincts of a money-making institution, so that the public can be assured that its reliable care-giving public-interest hospital—Lawrence General Hospital—doesn't get competitively edged out of functional relevance.

Lawrence General Hospital has served our community for 135 years, and provides tremendous, affordable access to all – low, middle or upper income. They have vital programs that would be impossible to replicate, and more than 1,400 employees, making it the City's largest employer, and an economic engine that drives a significant part of the economy in Lawrence.

I urge the Attorney General and her office—as well as the Department of Public Health—to ensure that this sale and transfer is in the public interest. The safe and fair thing to do would be for the AG to put appropriate special conditions on how this venture capital firm's investment will be regulated over the many years to come. To help determine what special conditions would be most appropriate, I urge the AG to work with Lawrence General, with a careful view toward preserving the most beneficial health care access available to our community—as well as much-needed jobs—in the greater Lawrence area. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Armand M. Hyatt